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# The Labour Pilgrim's Progress

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*"In time it is likely that the world will be better divided,  
"and he that has the toil of Ploughing will have the first  
"cut at the reaping.*

*"A man with £200,000 a year eats the whole fruit of  
"6,666 men's labour through a year: for you can get a stout  
"spadesman to work and maintain himself for the sum of  
"£30. Thus we have private individuals whose wages are  
"equal to the wages of 7,000 or 8,000 other individuals.  
"What do these highly beneficed individuals do to society for  
"their wages? Kill partridges. Can this last? No, by the  
"soul that is in man it cannot, and will not, and shall not!"  
—Carlyle.*

## PREFACE.

IN launching this little book, one word of explanation is perhaps necessary to prevent misconception as to the intended content of the Labour Pilgrim's burden. There are many persons in business on their own account to whom "profits" will appear as the only source of their income; and these will say: "Are we, who work hard at producing and distributing goods which other people consume or have the benefit of, to be told that we are a burden upon the industrious community?"

Now "profits" as used in this story (and indeed in political economy, to say nothing of accountancy) must be understood to be the fund that remains after all wages, salaries, or remunerations for services rendered to any enterprise have been paid. Anyone in business for himself charges, or should charge, his business with the market value of his own labour before calculating what his profits (if any) are. If, as often happens, there is not enough margin between the industrious proprietor's actual outgoings and his hard cash incomings to permit him to do this, not enough indeed to allow himself a "living wage," that simply means that he is being crushed under the same burden as all other useful persons in modern society. The return that should come to him in exchange for the value of his

labour is being diverted in the form of either rent, interest, or profit to someone else who has done nothing to earn it. Just as Lord Beaconsfield was once on "the side of the Angels" he therefore ought to be, and in course of time will be, on the side of the labour pilgrim.

It is of the essence of the burden that it be something not earned, and the fact that some of its beneficiaries are actually engaged more or less usefully in the fields of actual production or distribution constitutes no exception to this rule, for, as far as their services are concerned, verily they have their reward in the wages of superintendence, and it is what they get over and above that reward that constitutes profit.

Now that a severely correct Chancellor of the Exchequer has acknowledged the real character of the white proletarian's burden by taxing "unearned" incomes 3d. in the £ more than earned, the difference between profits and reward of industry would speedily come out if all private businesses were turned into limited liability companies, for then what an employer received as salary or wages of superintendence would pay in the shape of income tax 9d. in the £, while what he received (formerly as profits) now as dividends would have to bear a deduction of 1/- in the £.

## THE LABOUR PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.

ONCE having walked a long way through a great many cities and villages, and seen much of the people who labour, and how little they get for all their toil, so that the thought of them weighed heavily on my mind, I came to a place where there was a soft grassy bank and laid me down to sleep, and as I slept I dreamed a dream. I dreamed, and behold! I saw a man clothed in rags, whose legs and arms were gnarled like trees with excessive toil, whose face bore the marks of constant want and care, but whose eyes still shone brightly with the unquenchable light of life. Upon his back was a great burden, and as I looked I saw that he was plunged in deep thought and trouble, and from time to time he broke out with a lamentable cry, saying "What shall I do?"

In this unhappy state of mind I saw him go to his miserable home, which stood with countless others, all of the same size and pattern, in the City of Destruction. Entering, he tried to hide his distress from his wife and children, but she, perceiving that something troubled him, challenged him to tell her the cause of his woe. Whereupon he, knowing that she would give him no rest until he had told her, spake thus :

"Oh, my dear wife, you who have shared

all the hardships of my lot all these years, know that I have just had my eyes opened to the terrible fate which awaits us. While we could get food, no matter how coarse or poor, for the children to eat—while, by working ever harder and harder, we could just manage to keep our landlord from turning us out of doors, we have thought all was well; and although we have often longed for a little respite from the never-ending struggle to keep ourselves alive, we have been well content when we have lain down at night with the thought that we had succeeded for yet another day. But now all is changed. Do you see this strange burden on my back? Perchance you do not. I did not until to-day, when my eyes were opened by the talk of a man who asked me whether I had noticed that the harder we workers worked, the greater became the struggle to live. When I told him that I had never stopped to question why, but now that he mentioned it I did remember having noticed that we seemed to have to work harder than we used to, and with less reward; that you, my dear wife, for instance, go to the factory now when you ought to be looking after the little ones, while I spend what is called by way of derision my ‘spare time’ in working on a little patch of land for which I pay a heavy rent, trying to grow the things which my wages ought to cover but do not, and that nevertheless in spite of all these endeavours we get less rather than more of the things our labour purchases.



"Then said he, 'It is because of the burden of Rent, Interest, and Profit that you, with all other workers, carry on your back.' And with that a light seemed to break upon me. I saw for the first time the load that has been so grievously crushing me down, the weight whereof I have felt since I was a lad, but the meaning of which I have not understood until this good man opened my eyes thereto.

"'But, good sir,' said I, 'how comes it that only those who labour carry this burden, while those who live idly have no burden, but carry themselves uprightly, and seem to have a good conceit of themselves.'

"'Then replied he 'It is because they who toil not live upon the Rent, Interest, and Profit which the workers carry on their backs,'

"'I pray explain this thing a little further,' said I, for I did not understand why those who work not at all could thus live at the expense of those who do nothing else but work.

"'That will I,' said he, 'this burden that the workers carry is the product of their own toil. They labour to produce for their own needs, but before they can produce a blade or an ear for themselves they must first have produced two for these others.

"'But why, Sir,' said I, interrupting him, 'are they thus forced to part with the fruit of their toil?'

"'I will tell you,' said he; 'it is because the land upon which they work, and the tools they use, are no longer their own—and they

who own them withhold them from the workers unless the said workers can first produce the tribute of Rent, Interest, and Profit which they require of them. Thus it is that only those poor people who are willing or able to carry this burden while they work are permitted to labour—all the rest must rot or perish.'

"'Ah, Sir, but why is it, as thou hast just shewn me, that the worker's burden gets heavier the harder he works?'

"'That too I will shew thee,' said he. 'The burden you and your fellows carry consists of two parts,—that which is spent and that which is lent. Now that which is spent is something taken from labour once for all; it is wine, meat, raiment, or what not, which the fortunate receiver himself uses up and it is gone. Labour produced it, someone else has consumed it, and there is an end to it. But that is not so with what is lent. This too is consumed—consumed by him to whom it is lent; but in spite thereof it still exists—exists as a claim on what is yet to be produced. The workers, it is true, have paid it—have paid it by labour to him to whom it was lent, but although they have paid it they still owe it—owe to him who lent it. It is like unto an appetite that grows by what it feeds on.'

"'Now, therefore, whether thy burden grow heavier or not depends upon how much of the Interest, Profit, and Rent that is taken from labour is spent, in comparison with that

which is lent ; for although both bear thee down with their weight, the one there is some hope thou may'st get rid of in time, but the other grows greater the greater become thy efforts to be done with it. For it is when the workers are working hardest that they are producing most, and when they are producing most the greater are Rent, Interest, and Profit, and the greater Rent, Interest, and Profit become, the greater is the sum which the receivers thereof have no need to spend and can therefore lend ; thereby adding to that part of the load yoked permanently to the necks of those who toil. Thus it is that thy burden grows heavier the more productive thy labour and the greater the prosperity (as it is called) of thy country ! The more thou payest, the more thou owest !'

"At this I was sorely troubled in my mind, for I perceived that the result of all these years of your toil and mine, and of that of all those who have shared the same hard fate with us, has been but to add to the burden we carry, so that by and bye, I fear, it will become too grievous to be borne, and will crush us to the earth, and our little ones will perish."

Then the woman, who could see no burden on his back nor on her own, and who only knew of their daily needs and duties, began to be alarmed, and ran for her neighbours, to whom she told what her husband had said. And they, thinking that he was out of his mind, began to talk kindly to him, and to

dissuade him from thinking on such matters which were too deep for the understanding of the common people. But he was not to be comforted, and still from time to time cried "What shall I do?"

Now, I saw afterwards that as he wandered solitarily, pondering perplexedly upon his unhappy plight, there came to him a man named Socialist, who said "Why, my good fellow, are you looking so sad?"

And he replied, "It is because I fear that I shall lose my work, and then I know not what will become of me and of my family."

Then said Socialist "Lose your work! And has your work brought you so many good things that you are afraid of losing it?"

"No," answered he, "to tell the truth, Sir, I have had little of the good things of life, but I have managed to keep myself and my children alive, and if I lose my work I shall not be able to do even that, and then, alas! I know not how we shall escape from the wrath to come."

Whereupon Socialist asked him "And why are you afraid that you will lose your work? Is it because you have not worked hard enough?"

"Alas! No, Sir," replied he, "the sad truth (as I now find) is that we have worked too hard, and by so doing have but increased the greivous burden of Rent, Interest and Profit which you see upon my shoulders. I am fearful of that time coming when I too shall be amongst those I have seen in the

streets and byeways of this country, who are not able to get work because they are no longer able to carry the burden. I am cast down because I perceive that the workers of this place are caught in a trap from which there is no escape. We must work that we may live, and yet when we work we but increase this crushing load which bids fair to sink us in the end lower than the grave, and we shall fall into Tophet."

Then said Socialist, "If this be thy plight, why takest thou it lying down?"

He answered, "Because I know not whither to turn."

Then Socialist, pointing with his finger over a very wide field, said, "Seest thou yonder wicket gate called 'Labour Representation,' with the bright light beyond it?"

And he said, "I think I do."

"Well," answered Socialist, "follow that light and enter directly by that gate, and thou shalt find out what to do."

With that Workman (for such was his name) looked at the wicket gate as though he would run thereto immediately. iNevertheless he remembered his wife and children, and went back and told them that he was going on a journey, and she, beginning to perceive that her husband was not so mad as the neighbours had said, encouraged him to go, saying that if he did lose his work it would only happen a little earlier than they might otherwise expect it, and it was better to fall seeking for freedom than to fall without

being concerned about freedom at all, and that she would come with him but that there were the children ; besides which, women at present were not admitted by the wicket gate. With that he set out on his journey.

But the neighbours came out to see him go. And as he ran, some mocked, others threatened, and some cried after him to return ; and amongst the latter were two who were resolved to bring him back by force if needs be. The name of the one was Mr. Conservative and the name of the other was Mr. Liberal. Now, I saw by this time that the man was got on a good way from them ; but, however, they were resolved to pursue him, which they did, and in a little time they overtook him.

“Neighbours, wherefore are you come?” cried Workman.

“To persuade you to go back with us,” they said.

“No,” he replied, “that cannot be. You dwell in the City of Destruction, which is called by you the City of Production, because you only have regard to the things that are made there, and not to the human lives that are yearly wasted and destroyed. Friends, I have been enquiring much into these matters lately, and have ascertained many sad and astounding things from books and papers written by well informed men. Know you not that the people who dwell therein die at twice the rate that those do who dwell in the cities where no production is carried on,—that

of your newly born children two-hundred of every thousand die before they are one year old, and that of those who live past the first year there is as much as five inches difference in height and 14lbs. in weight between those who live in one room "houses" and those more fortunate but not less numerous children who inhabit four-roomed dwellings,\* there being thus a considerable portion of the actual bodies of these innocents sacrificed to the necessity of providing rent? Have you not heard, too, that in this City where so much wealth is made, one worker out of every three

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\*The report presented to the Scotch Education Department by Dr. W. Leslie, Medical Member of the Scotch Local Government Board, and Captain A. Foster, Inspector of Physical Training, showed that taking the children attending primary and higher grade schools in Glasgow, the average height and weight classified according to the number of rooms was found to be as follows :—

ONE ROOM :	Height.	Weight.
Boys .....	46.6 in.	52.6 lbs.
Girls .....	46.3 in.	51.5 lbs.
TWO ROOMS :		
Boys .....	48.1 in.	56.1 lbs.
Girls .....	47.8 in.	54.8 lbs.
THREE ROOMS :		
Boys .....	50.0 in.	60.6 lbs.
Girls .....	49.6 in.	59.4 lbs.
FOUR ROOMS :		
Boys .....	51.3 in.	64.3 lbs.
Girls .....	51.6 in.	65.5 lbs.

As the report states, "it cannot be an accident that boys from two-roomed houses should be 11.7lbs. lighter on an average than boys from four-roomed houses and 4.7 inches smaller. Neither is it an accident that girls from one-roomed houses are, on the average, 14lbs. lighter and 5.3 inches shorter than the girls from four-roomed houses."

above 60 years of age dies in a workhouse, asylum, or hospital, while of those not included in these, who live on to be a burden to their sons and daughters, the number is unknown? Have you not read also that it has been computed that amongst the workers of all ages one-tenth never earn enough even when they are in full work, and if they never spend a penny on anything save clothing, food, fuel and houseroom, to make up for the waste of their bodies which their toil occasions, and who thus are working their very bone and flesh into the things they make? No, good neighbours, I cannot continue to live in the City of Destruction. I seek another abiding-place, where men and women are not held as of less account than the things their hands produce."

"But thou art going forth on a wild goose chase," rejoined Conservative. "This City and its King (Heaven preserve Him!) and its noble institutions, are the best in the world, and the sun never sets on its possessions, while its aristocracy hath an ancestry (mostly purchased, I grant you) of which any man in thy rank of life might be proud. Come, say I, cultivate a good conceit of thy country—belittle it not; rather believe it to be the greatest in the world since thou wast born into it."

"Nay," said Workman, "what boots it that my country is great if I and my family starve? Would'st thou have me, whom thy aristocracy (whether it be founded upon entail or 'entire')



regards as but a frog, blow myself out with imperialist wind so that I may imagine myself an ox?"

"Thou art but a curmudgeonly fellow to speak thus of thy country," said Conservative. "As to the evil conditions of which thou speakest, to what are they due but the dirty and starving foreigners who are allowed to come here in hundreds of thousands to take the bread out of the very mouths of our own people. Put a stop to this, say I, and put a tax on the goods made by the cheap labour of other countries, which are too wide-awake to receive our goods free as we receive theirs, and then nobody will be out of work, and everybody will be better off."

"Stay," said Workman, "if everybody is to be better off under the improvements thou enumeratest, how comes it that the starving foreigners of whom thou speakest and the cheap labour come from the very countries which have adopted the said improvements?"

At this Mr. Conservative became exceeding wroth, because he could find no reply thereto ready at the end of his tongue, and Workman, finding that he kept silence, continued the conversation thus: "But, good neighbour, if all that thou desirest (as to which I hazard no opinion) came to pass, I cannot see that this burden which we—thou as well as our neighbour here and I—carry would drop off our shoulders, and it is that that I burn to lose, for the weight thereof crusheth me to the earth."

"As to that," replied Conservative, "thou must be mad; for the world could not go forward except by the help of Rent, Interest, and Profit. Without interest and profit, capital would leave the country (and let me tell thee that it is through such turbulent fellows as thou that much of it hath left already), while without rent the land would leave—well, no, I don't mean the land would leave the country, but the landlords would, and if thou hast no landlords thou canst have no tenants, and without tenants there is no one to till the land, and unless the land be tilled thou and all of us will perish. Thou art a mad fellow, I tell thee, to think of ridding thyself of this burden. But I tell thee what thou canst do. Come back with me, and I will show thee how thou may'st become stronger so as to bear it with ease. Put a two shilling tax on foreign corn, and ten per cent. on ——"

"Nay, nay," said Workman, not permitting him to finish the sentence, which he was rolling off his tongue like a lesson learned at school. "Even if thy specific could increase my strength so that I might bear this burden with greater ease, what will that profit me if the burden become correspondingly heavier too? Shall I be any better off with twice the strength and twice the amount of Rent, Interest, and Profit to carry on my shoulders? Will not the burden be as heavy then as now, and shall I not be worse off if my strength fail me? While others are living on what

the workers produce, as well as the workers themselves, I know that everything that increases the total product only increases the idlers' share, and thus but adds to the grievous burden we workers bear. Nay, nay, Mr. Conservative, the only cure for our malady is to lose this burden altogether, and it is in that hope that I am determined on my journey to yonder place."

"Tush, tush," said Conservative; "away with thy dreaming. Will you go back with me or no?"

"Not I," said the other.

"Come, then, neighbour Liberal, let us go home again without him. There is a company of cranks and fanatics, who when they take a fancy by an end are wiser in their own eyes than seven men who can render a reason."

"Not so fast, Mr. Conservative," said his companion, "There is much in what this good man saith that hath the sound of truth in it, and I am greatly constrained to go with him part of the way at least. I hold it to be an offence against good manners that when two travellers are going the same road they should walk apart because the one is of a mind to go further than the other." And in so saying, Mr. Liberal increased his pace so as the better to keep up with Workman, but Mr. Conservative, finding the company no longer to his liking, turned hack, and started towards his home, not however, without first casting some opprobrious names after the other two, amongst which I caught the words

"Traitors!"—"Pro-Foreigners!" and the like epithets.

Now, as Workman and Mr. Liberal walked they conversed together, and Mr. Liberal was much put to it to explain that although, as Workman had truly said, there were many evils in the City of Destruction, it must not be supposed that things were not much better than they had been. He for his part believed in Progress, and he was sure that his friend Workman believed in Progress also. Let them, therefore, walk together like good comrades.

"But," said Workman, "if there has been this Progress of which you speak, how comes it that the workers share so little in it? Hath not one of your great men said (and in that he spoke truly) that one in three of the inhabitants of this city are on the verge of famine? What has Progress done for them, say I?"

*Liberal*: "Come, Mr. Workman, thou art not of those who deny that the workers have been worse off than they are now, art thou?"

*Workman*: "But surely, Mr. Liberal, it is impossible to be worse off than to be on the very edge of starvation. To be worse off is to slip right over that edge, and to slip over into starvation is to quit the world, and I take it that the Progress thou vauntest is of this world, not of the next?"

*Liberal*: "Yet thou hast many things which the workers of olden times had not."

*Workman*: "Yes, I have the vote—but I

only have that while I have work, and I only have work while I can carry this burden that thou seest on my back. If I lose my work, or refuse to carry this burden, I lose my vote. What gain, therefore, is it to me, although the State does give it, as thou sayest, if my masters can take it away by the simple method of refusing to give me work or of increasing the burden past bearing?"

*Liberal*: "Would'st thou then give up thy vote?"

*Workman*: "Not if I can use it to enable me to get rid of this burden, which troubleth me sore."

*Liberal*: "There is much in what thou sayest which interests me greatly, and I think we both mean the same thing in the end. Let us therefore continue our talk as we walk along."

So saying I saw that Mr. Liberal and Workman continued their journey, conversing very earnestly together, and not noticing that they had departed from the road which led to the Wicket Gate. Now it came to pass that as they walked they found themselves at last in a deep and miry place, from the which the more they tried to extricate themselves, the deeper they sank into it. Then was Workman sore afraid, for he perceived that he had lost his way and must perish miserably in this evil slough. So he cried aloud, but none answered, for it was grown dark, and there were few about to heed his call. Then he turned to Mr. Liberal, and blamed him for

bringing him to this pass ; but Mr. Liberal, who by this time had found a hard place upon which to step, laughed, and said, "Nay, good friend, if thou could'st not find thy way through this place thou should'st not have ventured herein." And thus saying, I saw that Mr. Liberal, having got himself free, ran to his own home, covered with mire from the slough into which he had been plunged. But Workman was like to sink to the bottom, and all but gave himself up for lost, when he perceived Socialist coming towards him on some stepping stones, keeping himself as free as possible from contamination with the mud of the place, and called loudly to him for help.

"What dost thou here?" enquired Socialist, pulling at him vigorously so as to get him out of the bog. "I came here with Mr. Liberal," said he ; "he engaged me in conversation as we walked, and I saw not that I had lost my way, and so fell into this slough."

"Knowest thou the name of this place?" said Socialist.

"I do not," replied Workman.

*Socialist* : "It is called 'Party Politics,' and it is the Slough of Despond for all who sincerely desire the emancipation of men and women from evil conditions. Thou art fortunate to have got out of it safely, for few escape with souls to call their own."

Then I saw that Socialist accompanied Workman until he was on the road again, and with many injunctions not to be turned aside, but to make straight for the Wicket Gate,

and to enquire there for the land called "Commonwealth," meantime keeping his eyes on the bright light which shone beyond it, he left him, and Workman continued on his way alone.

Now as he went, I saw in my dream that there drew nigh unto him a man whose name was Mr. Otherworldly Wiseman, and who, on getting up to him, greeted him after this manner :

*Mr. Otherworldly Wiseman* : "How now, good brother, whither goest thou?"

*Workman* : "I am making for yonder Wicket Gate, where I am well assured I shall be put in the way of losing the heavy burden I carry."

*Mr. Otherworldly Wiseman* : "Ah, my good brother, who hath been giving thee bad advice? Know ye that at yonder gate they mend not souls, and it is thy soul that standeth in need of salvation—not thy condition."

*Workman* : "Good sir, I perceive that thou knowest not what it is to carry such a burden as that I bear, or thou wouldst know that in this life the body and its needs come first. Until my back is made straight, I doubt me whether my soul will be able to walk upright."

*Mr. Otherworldly Wiseman* : "Yet if thou hadst not this burden thou wouldst likely spend thy substance in drink and thy leisure in riotous pleasure."

*Workman* : "Nay, good sir, if you mean that this burden is imposed upon us for our

good, then must I contradict you. For thou knowest that those who benefit by what we carry are not so concerned about our souls as they are about the continuance of those good things which they derive from our labour. It is, in truth, for their benefit that we toil long, and earn little, and not for our own. This talk about the soul I take for cant on the part of those who have more than they want of this world's goods, and for foolishness on the part of those who have less."

*Mr. Otherworldly Wiseman* : "Do I understand thee to deny that men have souls?"

*Workman* : "Nay, Mr. Otherworldly Wiseman, I said not so ; but indeed the affairs of the soul get little chance while the body lacks that which it needs for its sustenance. To have enough assured to all, so that men may live without fear of hell before their eyes, is, in my humble opinion, the first article in the creed of true religion."

*Mr. Otherworldly Wiseman* : "And what hell, foolish man, is it that money will secure thee against?"

*Workman* : "The only hell that millions upon millions of toilers in this world have ever known—the Hell of Poverty. That is the hell, good sir, whence the Devil and all his Archangels issue to corrupt, degrade, and trample upon the souls of countless men, women and babes, who would otherwise have lived happy and useful lives."

*Mr. Otherworldly Wiseman* : "I perceive that thou art an Atheist."



*Workman*: "Nay, sir, not I, but you, who would postpone justice to the other world—you and your kind are the true Atheists. If God will set wrong right in the world to come, I have sufficient faith in Him to be assured that He has a mind to have it set right now, as an earnest of His intentions hereafter."

At this, *Mr. Otherwordly Wiseman* stopped up his ears as one who heard blasphemy, and wishing to parley no further with *Workman*, who he saw was an obdurate man, and much set upon the purpose he had made up his mind to, bade him "Good day," and left him in a great haste.

And I saw in my dream that *Workman*, after much adventure, and many falls, at last arrived at the gate, upon which were thirty-two bars representing the number of those who had gone through, but with space left for, I should think, upwards of 600 more. And as he knocked, it was opened by a Porter, who enquired his business.

"I am desirous of passing through this gateway to the land Commonwealth, which I am told lies beyond," said *Workman*.

"And on what grounds do you base your claim to pass through the approach to that region?" enquired the Porter.

"On the ground," replied he, "that I am of those who live by the labour of head or hand."

"Pass in," said the Porter, "for my instructions are to exclude only those who seek

to live idly upon the Labour of others. Some there be who have sought to force open this gate with a golden key, saying that they would buy their way into the promised land. But them I have refused admission, for indeed they would not be happy in the land Commonwealth, where no man is allowed to own that which giveth him power over his neighbours ; for the way of their kind is to strive only for the happiness which is gained at the cost of that of others."

With that Workman walked in, and as he passed along a narrow way, with high banks on either side, he came across others who were going in the same direction, with whom he held converse.

"I preceive," said Workman, "that although we have all gained admittance by the Wicket Gate, the burdens we carry are not yet fallen from our backs, the which grieveth me greatly, for I had hopes to lose my load upon reaching the place called "Labour Representation."

Then answered one who walked with him : "There, good friend, thou wert wrong. For I apprehend that there is no losing this load until we arrive at the land Commonwealth which lies beyond."

On hearing this, Workman was sick at heart, for he had hoped thus early to obtain the relief he sought, but he held his peace, remembering that each step he had taken since setting forth on his journey had brought him knowledge and hope, and that by the

support these had given him he was more than recompensed for the pains and toils he had undergone.

Now as he passed along, he noticed there were some who seemed content with the progress they had made, and who sat by the wayside like travellers who had arrived at their journey's end. But others, by no means so content, pressed forward, and ever and anon surveyed the distant Landscape, as though they were filled with a great impatience to be at their destination.

Now as they continued their journey, I saw that at last they came to a place where at the wayside, almost hidden from sight, so little did the daylight shine therein, was an iron cage, and in this cage was a man not a great way past the middle age, but looking very old, so bent was he with heavy toil and sorrow. Now the man to look on seemed very sad. He sat with his eyes looking down on the ground, and he sighed as if he would break his heart. Workman, perceiving him in so wretched a plight, was moved to great pity, and said to him, "What art thou?" Thereupon the man replied—"I am what I was not once."

"And what wast thou once?" asked Workman.

And the man said: "I was once a worker like thyself, and I toiled night and day, and in my own eyes was doing well, for I thought I should gain wealth and property by my hard toil."

*Workman* : " And what art thou now ? "

*Man* : " I am now a man of despair, and am shut up in this iron cage and cannot get out."

*Workman* : " But how camest thou to get into this condition ? "

*Man* : " I am here because I put my trust in works and not in faith. I thought that by working hard I should make my fortune and lift myself above my fellows as some do, and that thereafter I might have the reward of my toil. But I preceived not then, as I do now, that fortunes are not made by work, but by faith—faith in the endless gullibility of the working classes."

*Workman* : " Thou speakest in riddles. What is the meaning thereof ? "

*Man* : " Listen, and I will tell thee. When I was a young man I saw that some were better off than others, and that their good fortune must be the reward of their merit, so I determined that I too would win the prize ; and as work at my trade was the only thing I could do well, being the only skill at which I had training, I strove by working hard and long to win the reward these others had attained unto. But, alas ! in so doing I fell foul of my fellow-workers, who were banded together the better to protect themselves against the attempts of their masters. ' Ah,' said they, ' this young man desires to make much money, and to put it by and to marry, perchance, his master's daughter ; ' for in truth I was not the first to conceive such an idea, it having been common to young work-

men since the time of Jacob and his brother Esau. 'But he does not perceive,' so ran their thought, 'that by so doing he is making it the worse for us all, and the better for our masters. For, if his example is a good one for us to copy, then it must be better for us all to follow it. Yet the contrary is the case, for when our masters perceive that we can work for our own sakes fourteen hours a day, as he doth, whereas we now work ten hours a day and think that too long, then they will say: Why should we pay these labourers more for the fourteen hours than we did for the ten? If we thereupon answer: But we only work the longer hours for the better pay, then will they say: True, but if you can all work longer by four hours than you did before, we shall not require so many of you by four out of every fourteen, and the four we send about their business will very soon be pleased enough to come back again to work fourteen hours a day for the same or even less wages than they receive now for ten hours a day. So that the only result if we follow this young man's excellent example will be to increase the length of our toil and diminish our pay, for it is clear that if we bring fourteen hours of labour into the market where we now bring ten, we shall greatly increase the supply, and if the supply of a thing is increased and not the demand at the same time, the price thereof goeth down, as all men know.'

"Thus reasoned my fellow-workers, and I

perceive now that they were old hands at the game, and that from their standpoint as men having labour to sell they reasoned rightly, for I perceive that to get enough money to live idly upon is to live at the expense of those who toil, and the more of those who try to live at the expense of those who work the greater becomes the burden upon the workers' backs. But then I understood not these things, so I still strove to make money by working harder than the rest, but at last, by reason of my hard toil and the persecution of my fellows (for which I cannot find it in my heart to blame them, knowing as I do now how tight driven they are), I fell sick, and while I was in that state my savings were all used up, for I was on my sick bed for a very long time ; and when at last I was better I sought to return to my old place, but lo ! it was filled by another."

"Since that time I have had other employments, some of which I have kept for a short and some for a long time, but never again have I thought to make myself rich by my own labour, for I have learnt that a man becometh rich by other men's labour—not by his own, and rather by limiting than by increasing the supply of those things which his fellows require in order to sustain their very lives. And the manner in which he doeth this is as follows : He, by himself, or in conjunction with others like-minded with himself, useth all his and their credit and money in buying up all that there is in the world of

a certain thing. This he doth by reason of the faith that is in him—the faith that people will pay a high price for what they want rather than perish for lack of it, and it is a faith that is justified by its fruition, for it bringeth him great gain when he cometh to sell the goods he hath thus cornered. And thus it is that I spoke of riches being of faith and not of works.”

“But to return to my story—after many years of labour and sorrow, my back becoming bent in the manner thou seest, and my eyes dim, they who gave me work ceased at last any longer to do so, saying they could get younger men for the same money, but as I could only just support my poor wife and family upon what hitherto I had had, I neither could nor would work for less; besides I hated to undersell those who were in equal straits with myself; and so at last having sold, piece by piece, all my household goods, and having been turned out of my home because I had not paid the rent, having nothing to pay it with, and being likely to die of starvation, they brought me here and put me in this iron cage, and here I shall remain until I die, for they will not let me out.”

*Workman*: “But is there no hope, my poor man, but you must be in this iron cage of despair? I cannot see that thou hast done any man a wrong.”

*Man*: “My only crime is my poverty, but that is the most unforgiveable sin of all.”

*Workman*: “No hope! Can it be there is no hope for such as thee?”

*Man*: "None that I can perceive. Life has had its hopes—it has such for the poorest worker—but one by one they have disappeared. The labour burden crusheth out all hope until it is dead. I cannot believe now that I shall ever leave this iron cage, and I am getting to such a pass that, alas! I shall soon no longer want to, but shall be content to sit idly and listlessly watching those who, like myself, pass by."

*Workman*: "And what is the name of this dreadful place, over which I see written, 'Abandon hope all Ye who Enter Here!'"

*Man*: "The name hereof is 'Workhouse,' and those who are imprisoned herein are called 'Paupers,' and one who was a former great controller over these places said, and said truly, 'Once a pauper, always a pauper.'"

*Workman*: "Where is thy family?"

*Man*: "My wife, having enough strength left, is just able to keep herself in a distant city, until she too gets too old to work for a mere pittance any longer. My children have been sent away to other places, where they are dressed in a strange garb, and taught how to become menials for the service of others."

*Workman*: "Why, then you are all separated from each other. But what of the family life? Is it not said that it is wrong to break it up thus?"

*Man*: "Wrong or right, my good Workman, that is what they do."

*Workman*: "Alas! but thou art in a sad case, my brother, and I fear me there are



many like thee, whose lives are without hope," and so saying, and weeping bitterly at the sufferings of the man in the iron cage, Workman and those who accompanied him went on their way.

Soon they came to a place called "Vanity Fair," where most of the pilgrims were received with open arms, some being taken to the palace of the King, where they were royally entertained, and the King himself shook hands with them (an event which was considered a high honour); and others were taken to the houses of certain rich men, who resided in that place, where was much feasting, and many flattering things were said to the pilgrims, and fine dames made much of them.

Now the people who live in Vanity Fair draw great wealth from the burden of Rent, Interest and Profit which the workers bear, and there is therefore a great feud between that city and the country of Commonwealth, to which the pilgrims were bound, for in that country there is no Profit or Interest; and Rent, such of it as remains, belongs to the whole people, and is merely the payment, by him who occupies a piece of land of a particular advantage, of the value of that advantage to the people of Commonwealth, from whom he has it, and is therefore a burden to no one, but a benefit to all. Knowing, therefore, that the pilgrims were on the way to Commonwealth, it was the secret intent of the inhabitants of Vanity Fair to prevent

them from continuing their journey, for they feared lest the workers should learn where they can lose their burdens, and their city be thereby reduced to beggary. To this end, therefore, made they these feasts.

But there were some of the pilgrims who would not be stayed in their journey, and when the people of Vanity Fair saw this they were very angry, and sought to detain them by force. Some they starved, others they threw into dungeons, and one named Faithful, who had been the first to enter by the Wicket Gate, they stoned until he was nigh unto death. But all that they did was of no avail, for the pilgrims were determined on their journey; and after receiving many blows, and undergoing much suffering, they escaped from that city, and got them on to the highway leading to Commonwealth.

Now it came to pass that as Workman and his fellows dragged themselves wearily along the road (for I saw they were sore stricken by their buffetings and privations) they reached a high hill, which from the side they approached sloped gently up, but towards the other side descended suddenly, so that from the top thereof could be seen a wide expanse of country which was covered with fruit trees and vines, and scattered over which, but so as in no sense to spoil the beauty of the place, or to be unduly crowded together, were the habitations of a numerous and prosperous people. As Workman looked upon this scene he perceived that here and there buildings of

beautiful design, and of great splendour, rose above the rest, and that to and from these buildings as many of the inhabitants as listed passed. By this latter he knew they were not the castles or dwellings such as those he had seen round about the place where he was born, which belonged to great lords, who drew all their revenue from the City of Destruction, but took great care not to live therein. Now as he looked, and wondered much at what he saw, because of the signs of great abundance everywhere, behold! I saw in my dream that there came to him one called "Interpreter," of whom he asked the name of that country.

*Interpreter* : "This is the land called 'Commonwealth.'"

*Workman* : "Doth that imply that no man who liveth therein hath property of his own?"

"Nay," said Interpreter smiling, "everyone possesseth such property as he or she requires for personal use or decency's sake. There are, indeed, none so poor as to possess nothing—that would be considered shameful in a land where everyone can obtain by his or her own efforts such personal chattels as they may desire. Moreover, what they own they are in no danger of losing, for they are never out of work, and therefore never have to sell, or pawn, those personal belongings which, by their nature, are truly private property, as do those who live in the old and backward countries of the world, which hypocritically profess to believe in private property as a sacred rite but practice it not except in the

form of theft from the poor. The only private property not permitted in this country is private property in public things, and that is why it hath the name 'Commonwealth,' and why there is none destitute in its borders."

*Workman* : "And pray, Sir, what manner of houses are they I see standing out so boldly from amongst the rest?"

*Interpreter* : "They are the Public Buildings; for the people of this country, albeit they live in great simpleness in their own homes, will have it that there should be magnificence and beauty in all that appertains to the State. Those buildings you see are the schools, churches, colleges, public offices, theatres, lecture halls, and dancing places maintained at the public expense, and adorned inside and out with everything that art or knowledge can provide, and travellers come from afar to see them, so great is their fame."

*Workman* : "Then must the rates of this country be high?"

*Interpreter* : "That is so, if thy meaning be that the people spend more of their money on public things than on private. They do this because they say that for what they spend altogether in a public way they get a much greater value, pound for pound, than for what they spend separately each for himself. Yet in their homes they are never hard put to it to supply their daily needs—there is an abundance of goods of all kinds of a good quality for them to buy, and enough of money

to be got with which to buy them, if only they be willing to go into the Commonwealth workshops, or farm lands and vineyards, where all are given employment who apply for it, according to the degree of their skill or ability."

*Workman* : " And must all seek work, then, in the Commonwealth workshops ? "

*Interpreter* : " No, indeed, for in this country is great liberty, and the men and women thereof can work for the Commonwealth, or for each other, or for themselves, as it pleaseth them to do."

*Workman* : " And doth not such freedom lead to the oppression of the labourers, as it hath done (to mine own undoing) in the city from which I come ! "

*Interpreter* : " Nay—for in this land no man can lay a burden on another without that other's consent."

*Workman* : " How, sir, can that be when it hath ever been the aim of one man to get an advantage over another ? "

*Interpreter* : " I will tell thee. It is because in Commonwealth the land, the highways, the coal, the iron, the great forces of nature like electricity, steam, and the tides, the surplus of former harvests, the great tools and machines wherewith the labourers work,—in short all those things which are necessary to the life of the people, are held to be the property of the State. Now, when no man, or body of men, hath the right to possess, or buy or sell, or use or leave unused, those things which as I have

shewn thee the very life of the people dependeth upon, then they no longer hold in their hands that whereby one man extorteth Rent, Interest, and Profit from another—their capital or advantage hath gone.”

*Workman* : “ But, Sir, do not some still strive to possess themselves of these things in order that they may even yet obtain the advantage of which thou speakest ? ”

*Interpreter* : “ Some such there be, no doubt, for they and their kind are ever loth to give up what gives them a power over their fellows. But their day hath departed. The public opinion of this place would no more think of permitting the sale of public property than that of thy country would think of permitting the buying and selling of men, women and children as slaves: The people of Commonwealth know full well the rock upon which their freedom is built, and will never again cease to cleave unto it. Even the little children in the school learn to repeat with their lessons : He who would sell the heritage of the people betrayeth the Commonwealth ; and written up over some of their chief buildings, so that he who runs may read, is the saying ‘ The Public Ownership of Public Things is the Beginning of Freedom. ’ ”

*Workman* : “ Ah, Sir, I perceive this is indeed an enlightened and a happy land. ”

*Interpreter* : As to happiness, the people are much like other people. Think not that their life runneth ever smoothly, or that they have no ungratified desires, or that some are not

low placed and others high. There are indeed great diversities amongst the inhabitants, both as to character and calling. Only in one respect do they stand out above all the rest of the world—they carry no burden of Rent, Interest, and Profit such as that I see thou carriest. Now, it is the nature of this burden, when it is permitted to be borne, that it not only boweth down with want, and sweat, and tears, they who carry it, but it imprisoneth the human mind, which can never escape from the contemplation of the poverty and suffering it causeth. It provoketh fear, and where fear is there the spirit is not free. Now, in Commonwealth this burden, as I have shewn thee, is banished. Therefore it happeneth that the spirit of the people hath regained its vigour. Set free from the old, old riddle, which had puzzled, imprisoned, and rendered abortive and barren the minds of men for so many weary ages, the citizens of this country have applied themselves with great zest to all manner of new pursuits, pleasures and inventions. Knowledge, and learning and art have flourished to a degree undreamed of in a world where so much of the best talent was fettered for ever to but one hard fact, one all-powerful necessity. And thus it is that this land hath become a bright and shining light unto all the nations of the earth."

*Workman* : "Good Sir, may I enter this land and lose this dreadful burden that I carry?"

*Interpreter* : "That mayst thou, if thou wilt comply with one condition."

*Workman* : "And what, Sir, is that?"

*Interpreter* : "Go back and bring thy wife and fellow-workers with thee when thou returnest here again, *for thou canst not be saved by thyself alone.*"

*Workman* : "That will I do. For I know the way now ! I know the way !"

. . . . .  
And with the joyful shout of Workman's voice ringing in my ears, as he hastened back with the good tidings to his fellows, I awoke.

THE END.









